

5 Ways I Can Serve My Local Church (2016 Focus) Pleasant Plains 5-1-2016AM NICK ANGEL

- ***Read Ephesians 4:11-16*** A text that has probably become very familiar to us all because of our focus this year on Serving the Kingdom. As we have noted several times, Paul explains in this text how God has set up for the church to be served and built up so that the members that make up the Body of Christ would be strengthened, and so that they might grow to be more like Jesus Christ in all that they do. We have discussed the edification aspect of this text just recently, and we have also discussed the roles of service and leadership that help for edification to be accomplished.
- This morning, I would like for us to consider another aspect of this text that will serve us well to consider in light of our focus for this year. In **Ephesians 4:16**, the Apostle Paul concludes this thought about being built up and growing by focusing on the fact that growth comes when every joint supplies what it should and each individual part does its proper work. When it comes to helping the local church to grow through our individual service, we need to recognize that there is much that we can do! Last month we discussed the subject of finding our place to serve. That lesson focused on the idea of service and some theory behind it. This lesson we will consider today, will be much more practical in its nature, and it will be very personal in nature. I want to talk about 5 ways that I can serve my local church. This verse focuses on the individual's part in growth and service, and we're going to do the same thing this morning. Let's consider five things can I do.....that we all can do.... to serve the local church that we am a part of.

I. Commit To The Work

- A. The first thing I can do to serve one of the Lord's local churches is to join myself to one of them, and make that commitment to be a part of it. Some might frown at the idea of joining a local church, but the Apostle Paul saw it a good thing to try to join himself to the church that was there in Jerusalem. **(Acts 9:26)**
- B. Joining ourselves and committing to the local church gives us a sense of responsibility towards it, and this is important because a lack of feeling of responsibility can greatly inhibit good service.
- C. You might have noticed the way that I phrased the title of this lesson. 5 ways that I can serve my local church. This type of language isn't used to say that I own this church. This is the Lord's church, but saying that it is my local church (we/us) gives a sense of commitment that might not be as strong if I constantly refer to this group as "them or they." Saying things like that can easily give off the impression that I am separate and apart from this group, and therefore I might not feel as motivated to serve a people that I am not a part of.
- D. Last month, we considered **I Corinthians 12** and its plea for unity among the many members. The closeness that should be had among the members of a local church is such that when one suffers, we all suffer. When one is blessed and honored then we all should rejoice. **(I Cor. 12:24-26)**
- E. My commitment to the local church and the members of it is the first thing that I can do to serve this local body of believers.

II. Shine My Light

- A. Not only do I represent Christ in all that I do, but I also represent the local church that I am a part of, and shining my light in the correct way can certainly serve my local church well. **(Matt. 5:13-16)**
- B. My actions...what I do and what I say are a reflection of those that I assemble myself with. Those outside of my local church will (rightly or wrongly) judge the group I assemble with based upon what I do. Their perception of my local church will be influenced by their perception of me.
- C. This idea is especially relevant when it comes to evangelism. Serving my local church through shining my light in a good way can have a tremendously positive impact on reaching those outside the church with the Gospel. It must also be said that poor decisions and actions on my part can have a great negative impact when we try to reach those in need of the Gospel.
- D. My mindset should be that which is found in **I Peter 2:12; 3:16**. Everything I do ought to help our efforts as a church, and I can serve this local church well by shining my light bright and strong for the Lord and my local church.

III. Encourage My Brethren

- A. One of Satan's greatest weapons against the Christian is discouragement. As he goes about this world seeking those to devour, he gives every effort to plant seeds of doubt and discouragement in the heart of the believer so that he or she might lose all hope and give up in his or her service to God, the local church, and their fellow man.

- B. As a member of this local church, it is my duty to serve my brethren by being a constant source of encouragement to them in any way that I can be. **(I Thess. 5:11 "Therefore, encourage one another and build up one another")** There are many things that I can do to encourage my brethren.
- 1) I can encourage my brethren by being here with them. **(Heb. 10:23-25)**
 - 2) I can encourage my brethren by speaking well to them and saying the right thing at the right time. **(Eph. 4:29)**
 - 3) I can encourage my brethren through helping to bear their burdens and troubles. **(Gal. 6:2)**
 - 4) I can encourage my brethren through heart felt worship with them. **(Col. 3:16)**
 - 5) I can encourage my brethren by simply doing what is right. **(Phil. 4:8)**
- C. There is no shortage of ways in which I can encourage my brethren that I am committed to within my local church. When we all seek to encourage one another, then Satan has no chance of making us fall. What better service can I give to my local church than helping to encourage them in their fight against the evil one?

IV. Seek To Do Good

- A. We were saved in Christ so that we might do good works in the name of Jesus Christ. **(Eph. 2:10 "created in Christ Jesus for good works; Titus 2:14 "Zealous for good deeds)** We are to do good to all people, but we are especially to do good to those who are one with us in Jesus Christ. **(Gal. 6:10)**
- B. Therefore, I need to remember that I can serve my local church and the members of it by seeking to do good by them. There are many things that I can seek do to help strengthen my brothers and sisters that are a part of this local work.
- 1) I can seek unity among my brethren. **(I Cor. 1:10)**
 - 2) I can seek to be at peace with my brothers and sisters. **(Rom. 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men")**
 - 3) I can seek growth within our congregation. I can seek growth within myself to serve others because I'll be able to teach and lead by example better. **(II Peter 1:5-11)**
- C. When I seek to do good for my local church, I am serving it well because its best interests are at the forefront of my mind.

V. Love The Church

- A. All of these things are made easier to accomplish if I possess a true genuine love for God and my local church that I am a part of. Love can and ought to serve as my greatest motivational factor for my service towards the Lord's Body.
- B. If I love God, then I will seek to do His will and the influence of my actions will be good, pure, and right. Plus, as we have already discussed, my brethren will be encouraged by my righteous life.
- C. If I love God, then I will love His Word and I will be diligent to know it as best I can so that I will be pleasing to Him. My knowledge of God's Word can help others to grow, and that is a great service to them. **(I Tim. 4:13-16)**
- D. My love for God will lead me to love the church that He gave His only Son for. If I love the church then its best interests will be first and foremost in my mind. If I love the church then I will help her to go in the way that she should go according to the Scriptures.
- E. If I love the church, then these things that we have discussed with be seen in my life because I want my brothers and sisters to grow in the Lord and eventually be in heaven when this life is over.

Sometimes, I might get stuck thinking that there are not ways for me to serve this local group of God's people, but surely we recognize that there numerous ways that each and every one of us can serve this group. Its not about skill set. Its not about talent. It's about love for God and one another and desire to serve one another in this place. May God help us to serve in the ways that we have discussed this morning. May we be motivated by love to put forth the effort to serve this local church so that it might thrive in its work in the Kingdom of our most high God.